

OPPOSE HR 6, THE ENERGY
POLICY ACT OF 2005

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the newly elected President George W. Bush visited St. Paul to announce his vision of energy independence to the American people. Unfortunately, the President's vision of limitless domestic petroleum exploration, natural resource exploitation and consumption are becoming a reality. Today, tragically, House Republicans expand the Bush agenda of tax cuts for the energy industry, dependence on foreign oil and destruction of our environment.

With only two percent of world oil reserves, the U.S. will never be able to produce enough petroleum to be self-sufficient. America needs a comprehensive energy policy that prioritizes incentives for efficiency, conservation, alternative energy sources. Our nation needs to invest in the development of the next generation fuel sources like fuel cells, hydrogen power and home grown Minnesota fuels like ethanol. A major commitment and investment in these advancements has the potential to create a revolutionary transformation of the global economy, liberate our nation from our addiction to oil from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, and start the environmental healing that will keep our planet alive.

Unfortunately, H.R. 6 fails to even attempt to meet these goals and in fact undermines them. Instead, the Republican energy bill spends 93 percent of the \$8.1 billion in tax incentives it provides to oil and coal companies. The same companies that are already making huge profits from the skyrocketing gas prices our families are paying to heat our homes and put gas in our cars. The President doesn't even believe these companies need incentives. At a recent speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, President Bush said, "I will tell you with \$55 oil, we don't need incentives for oil and gas companies to explore. There are plenty of incentives. What we need is to put a strategy in place that will help this country over time become less dependent."

This Republican bill wastes enormous amounts of taxpayer money and it contributes to the destruction of our environment. It tramples the 'polluter pays' principle and forces the American people to pick up the \$29 billion cost to clean up the mess created by MTBE—the mess that is contaminating the drinking water of tens of millions of Americans. It's an outrageous abuse of power to let these MTBE polluters off the hook and force a billion dollar unfunded mandate onto our counties and cities.

There were amendments that would have improved this bill, which I voted for, but they were defeated by Republican majorities. These amendments intended to protect our environment and our families while providing for responsible policies to advance a sustainable energy future for our nation.

It is with great disappointment that my colleagues and I who have visited the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge were unable to stop the majority party's obsession with destroying this pristine wilderness by allowing oil drilling. I

also supported an amendment to stop MTBE producers from passing the \$29 billion cost of cleaning up their pollution to the U.S. taxpayer. I also voted for an amendment to increase fuel-efficiency standards for our cars and trucks, saving billions of barrels of oil and improving our nation's air quality.

Each of these amendments failed because policy makers with a vision of a sustainable U.S. energy policy lost out to special interests determined to create larger corporate profits, but only after they receive the billions of dollars of corporate welfare benefits this Republican bill provides them.

Our nation cannot sustain its addiction to petroleum consumption. Incentives for efficiency, conservation and alternative energy sources combined with responsible leadership from the White House and Congress are all required if the U.S. is to lead the world in energy self sufficiency, rather than leading the world in energy dependency.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 81, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the two-year anniversary of the human rights crackdown in Cuba.

The people of Cuba have suffered under the authoritarian dictatorship of Fidel Castro for more than 45 years. Rather than allowing Cubans to thrive and live prosperous lives, the Castro regime has instead created a legacy of suppression, harm and failure. Cubans are ready for freedom, but their government does not want them to have even a taste.

Freedom-loving countries widely recognize that human rights violations against innocent Cubans are a sign Castro is afraid. Whether it is fear that Cubans will love freedom more than socialism, fear that a faltering economy will lead to more unrest, or fear of political opposition, it is clear Castro's government is a regime of fear. Rather than securing rights for the good of the people, Fidel Castro has imprisoned those who have spoken against human rights violations and other injustices within Cuba.

I hope with the passage of this resolution we will again unite our voices with those who dream of a free Cuba and join with those whose voices have been silenced by a repressive government.

In March 2003 Castro arrested 75 people who were bold enough to speak out against harmful policies of the government. Men and women whose occupations included librarians, union organizers and civic leaders were charged with innocuous crimes and sentenced to long prison terms. While a few of those arrested have been conditionally released, most of these voices of freedom remain behind bars.

Ignoring international condemnation for its actions, the Cuban government continues down its path of suppression.

However, as history has shown, when one group of voices are silenced, other voices will fill the void and cry out. The yearning for freedom within the human spirit can be suppressed, but it cannot be extinguished.

One Cuban group speaking on behalf of Castro's political prisoners are the mothers, daughters, wives and sisters of those arrested more than two years ago. Every Sunday for the past two years, a band of 30 women, called the Women in White, attend mass at Santa Rita Catholic Church before proceeding down a sidewalk on a silent protest. Even after intimidation from Castro's thugs, this little band of women are determined to peacefully expose the injustice of what is happening to their relatives. I hope the Women in White, along with thousands of other Cubans, will have the strength to continue fighting for the right to live in freedom.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in voting for H. Con. Res. 81 and send a strong message that the American people stand in solidarity with all freedom-loving Cubans.

HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS ON APRIL 30, 2005

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of her coronation as Queen on April 30, 1980. Beloved by the people of the Netherlands, millions of Dutch citizens filled the streets of their cities to celebrate the event on April 30, 2005.

Since Queen Beatrix was installed in the Council of State and assumed the royal prerogative on her 18th birthday, she has accomplished a tremendous amount of good for the Netherlands. After completing college, she turned her attention to social welfare and the needs of disabled people. She became Patron of the National Fund for the Prevention of Poliomyelitis, which was later renamed the Princess Beatrix Fund in recognition of her work and contributions. She has assumed an active role in the formation of new governments in the Netherlands. Her dignity, grace and guiding presence underpin her importance as a unifying leader in her country.

The Netherlands has long been an important ally of the United States. From 1625 when the colony of New Amsterdam was first founded by the Dutch, the immigrants exemplified the ideals of tolerance, inclusion and the notion that hard work and study lead to success—important American values that endure today.

On April 19, 1982, the Netherlands and the United States celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. As Queen Beatrix stated at that celebration, "There are few countries whose relations down the centuries have been so genuinely cordial and mutually beneficial as those between your great country, Mr. President, and my own." We thank Her Majesty for her devotion to fostering that relationship and join her country in celebrating her long service to her Nation. Her enduring leadership continues to